

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 DHA-02 EA-07 AID-05 OMB-01 /084 W
-----201008Z 099606 /16

R 200735Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4726
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2735

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJECT: ZIA PICKS UP SEVERAL MORE ENDORSEMENTS

REF: A. DACCA 2613 B. DACCA 1590

1. IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, ZIA HAS RECEIVED SUPPORT
IN HIS REFERENDUM FROM THE SAMMYABADI DAL, THE PEKING-
ORIENTED LEFTIST PARTY OF MOHAMMAD TOAHA; THE
MINISCULE CONVENTION MUSLIM LEAGUE, PRESIDED OVER BY
M.A. MATIN; AND THE ISLAMIC DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE. HE HAD
PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED AN ENDORSEMENT FROM THE MUSLIM LEAGUE
(REFTEL A).

2. IN ANNOUNCING HIS SUPPORT MAY 19, TOAHA DECLARED:
"I FIND NO REASON WHY GENERAL ZIA SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO
WIN THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR PATRIOTIC PEOPLE. WE CONSIDER
HIM TO BE A PATRIOT. SINCE AUGUST 15, 1975, AND
PARTICULARLY SINCE NOVEMBER 7, THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION
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...HIS BEEN FIGHTING FOR SAFEGUARDING NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY." TOAHA USED THE OCCASION, IN
ADDITION, TO ASK ONCE AGAIN FOR THE RELEASE OF "THE
PATRIOTIC POLITICAL PRISONERS," A DEMAND HE HAD MADE
MANY TIMES.

3. CONVENTION MUSLIM LEAGUE AND ISLAMIC DEMOCRATIC

LEAGUE LEADERS DID NOT MAKE ANY SPECIFIC STATEMENTS
EXCEPT TO WELCOME THE DELETION OF SECULARISM FROM THE
CONSTITUTION.

4. IN A CONVERSATION BETWEEN POLOFF AND OBAIDUR RAHMAN,
THE DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE (DL) ORGANIZER WHO WAS ONLY
RECENTLY RELEASED FROM JAIL (REFTEL B), OBAID SAID THAT
THE DL WOULD NEITHER SUPPORT NOR WORK AGAINST ZIA IN THE
REFERENDUM. INSTEAD, THE PARTY HAD VOTED TO ISSUE A
STATEMENT QUESTIONING THE NEED FOR A REFERENDUM AND
DEMANDING A CLARIFICATION OF THE TYPE OF ELECTIONS PROMISED
FOR DECEMBER, 1978. FOR EXAMPLE, EXPLAINED OBAID, WOULD
THERE BE A PRESIDENTIAL AS WELL AS PARLIMENTARY ELECTIONS?
ACCORDING TO OBAID, THE PARTY ALSO HAD CALLED FOR THE
REPEAL OF THE FOURTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH
WAS ORIGINALLY ADDED BY SHEIKH MUJIB IN ORDER TO ALLOW
FOR PRESIDENTIAL RULE. THE STATEMENT HAS NOT YET SURFACED.

5. IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, DACCA HAS BEGUN TO LOOK MORE
LIKE A CITY ANTICIPATING AN ELECTION. POSTERS OF ZIA HAVE
BEEN PLASTERED ON WALLS AND BANNERS STRUNG ACROSS STREETS.
THE LACK OF MORE THAN ONE CANDIDATE HAS DECREASED THE
FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING IN A REGULAR ELECTION AND
A NORTHWESTER A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO DESTROYED MUCH OF THE
HANDIWORK OF ZIA'S SUPPORTERS. HOWEVER, DESPITE THESE
SIGNS OF ACTIVITY THERE IS LITTLE GENUINE INTEREST IN THE
POLL.

6. COMMENT: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE EARLIER MUSLIM
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LEAGUE ENDORSEMENT, THE EXPRESSIONS OF PARTY SUPPORT
DO NOT HAVE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR ZIA. OF COURSE, ZIA IS
NO DOUBT PLEASED TO RECEIVE ENDORSEMENTS FROM GROUPS
REPRESENTING DIFFERENT ENDS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM-
BUT THESE PARTIES (EXCEPT THE MUSLIM LEAGUE) DO NOT
HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE. THE PARTY THAT COUNTS IN THE AWAMI
LEAGUE, WHICH HAS BEEN SO TORN BY FACTIONAL STRIFE THAT IT
HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO AGREE ON A POLICY. AS FOR THE
DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE, IT HARDLY MATTERS TO ZIA WHAT THEY
DECIDE, SINCE WITHOUT MUSHTAQUE, THE PARTY SEEMS TO HAVE
LOST ITS RAISON D'ETRE, FOR IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A VEHICLE
FOR MUSHTAQUE'S PERSONAL POLITICAL AMBITIONS.
MASTERS

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